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Involving the user: challenges and threats of recent development

In the last two decades we saw an important shift in the services libraries could offer to their users. In the early 90's the libraries only had access to a limited number of databases – often very expensive with proprietary interfaces and only known by a small group of librarians.

The rise of the internet suddenly gave our customers the possibility to access databases – still using proprietary interfaces - by themselves at their desk. At the end of the 90's protocols such as Z39.50 enabled us to build federated search engines, later followed by techniques for data harvesting like OAI-PMH.

Meanwhile new generations of students and researchers grew up with Google and increasingly use social networks and all kinds of web 2.0 applications. They expect the same kind of services from their libraries.

At K.U.Leuven we were for a long time investigating the integration of different databases into one – easy to use – interface focused towards bachelor students. This new interface should circumvent the issues of Z39.50 and integrate traditional OPAC functionalities. With the implementation of Primo by Ex Libris we try to achieve this goal and increase our users' involvement.

During the presentation we will discuss how Primo could fulfill these requirements and the challenges we have to handle.

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